

qualitative characters like good taste, higher straw yield and tolerance during stress situations. Therefore these characters may be considered by the rice breeders to fit into the high yielding varieties during breeding programmes. It was observed that farmers in the study area were not familiar with the characters of many of the high yielding varieties. Hence efforts may be taken up, to popularise the traits and suitability of high yielding varieties and making the seeds of the preferred varieties available in time. Efforts may be initiated to engage farm youth in self employment oriented preferred agro based enterprises so

that migration may be reduced and thereby human skills may be better utilized indigenously.

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Research Notes

A study on the performance of contract farming in Coleus

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Medicinal plants are the local heritage with global importance. India takes pride in harbouring about 8000 different medicinal plants across its diverse ecosystems and cultures. India is endowed with a rich bio-diversity. Its rich traditional experience and wisdom is established comfortably in the Ayurveda and Siddha systems of medicine. Quite recently, there has been a rapid expansion and spread of the allopathic system of medicinal treatment in India. It creates commercial demand for pharmaceutical drugs and their products in India.

Realising the potential of herbal and medicinal plants, few companies have ventured

in cultivation of herbs. Now a herbal revolution is happening in the country to increase the share of India. Keeping this in view, the present contract programmes on Coleus crops has been thought of to be studied, to identify the pros and cons and to take up suitable measures for better performance.

Attur and Gangavalli blocks were selected purposively, because these two blocks had maximum area and maximum number of farmers who cultivated Coleus crop. Manjini and Valayamadevi villages in Attur block, and Othiyathur and Naduvallur villages in Gangavalli block were selected following the random

sampling procedure. The list of Coleus farmers for the selected four villages was obtained from the MGp Marketing company. The sample size was fixed as 100 considering time frame available for data collection. The respondents were selected following the stratified random sampling method.

Performance of Coleus contract farming

The factors responsible for effective performance in coleus contract farming were also studied under the same six major dimension of, farming dimension, extension dimension, market dimension, economic dimension, social dimension and other dimension.

Farming Dimension

It could be observed that minimum risk in farming was ranked first under farming dimension with a mean score of (2.81), followed by introduction of new crop varieties (2.73), assured income (2.64), assured production (2.44) and learning of new skills (2.20). Opportunities for increased farm mechanisation (1.58) was also found as one of the factor responsible.

Extension Dimension

Under extension dimension, technical guidance was ranked first with the mean score of 2.60, followed by timely availability of quality inputs (2.53) and awareness about appropriate technology (2.51).

Market Dimension

Among market dimension, assured price was ranked as first (2.80), followed by reduction in price risk (2.77), assured market (2.62) and access to new market (2.10).

Economic Dimension

Under economic dimension, the effective performance items were elimination of middlemen

(2.70), adequate financial support (2.60), reliable income (2.43) and immediate settlement of money and better standard of living (2.10 each). They got the first four ranks. The other influential factors were enlargement in business horizons (1.74), improved rural transport (1.55) and awareness about world trade (1.54).

Social Dimension

Under social dimension, the effective performance item was benefits to small farmers, which was ranked first with a mean score of 2.67. This was closely followed by coordination among farmers (2.62). More progressiveness (2.43), increased employment at village level (2.22), more awareness about legal aspects (2.15) and social recognition (2.13) were also found as influential factors.

Other Dimension

With reference to other dimension, the more effective performance item was coordination between producers and marketers which was ranked first (2.63), followed by awareness to adopt eco-friendly technology (2.36) and awareness to adopt post-harvest technologies (2.06).

From the above results, it could be concluded that minimum risk in farming, assured price for the harvested produce, reduction in price risk, introduction of new crop varieties, elimination of middlemen, assured income, good coordination between farmers and purchaser, good coordination among farmers, assured market, technical guidance received from the company, availability of adequate financial support, timely availability of quality inputs, and awareness about appropriate technology were the major effective factors for better performance of the coleus contract farming system.